

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for exchanging online information along an optimum path in a client/server system, said client/server system including a client having a plurality of Internet protocol (IP) addresses for sending and receiving the online information over an Internet network, and a server connected to said client via a router, said method comprising the steps of:

a), by said server, determining whether said client employs a private network and sending the determined result to said client;

b), by said client, sending information about its valid IP addresses to said server if said result determined at said step a) indicates that said client employs the private network;

c), by said server, sending acknowledgement information to all of said valid IP addresses contained in said information sent at said step b);

d), by said client, detecting an IP address at which said acknowledgement information sent from said server has arrived earliest, and then recognizing that the detected IP address is one for the provision of the optimum path to said server; and

e), by said client, exchanging the online information with said server via said IP address detected at said step d).

2. The online information exchange method as set forth in Claim 1, wherein said step a) includes the steps of:

a-1), by said client, sending to said server information about its IP address for access to said server;

5 a-2), by said server, comparing said access IP address with an IP address of said client for actual access to said server via said router to determine whether the two IP addresses are the same, and then determining from the compared result whether said client employs the private network; and

10 a-3), by said server, sending the determined result to said client.

3. The online information exchange method as set forth in Claim 1, wherein said step a) includes the step of, by said
15 server, sending to said client user index information for identification of said information sent from said client after said step a) is performed; and

wherein said step b) includes the step of, by said client, sending said user index information sent at said step
20 a) back to said server such that said server recognizes that said client is the very one connected thereto at said step a).

4. The online information exchange method as set forth in Claim 1, wherein said step b) includes the step of, by said
25 client, recognizing that it is connected to said server via a

public IP address, if said result determined at said step a) indicates that said client employs no private network, and then gaining access to said server via said public IP address to exchange the online information with said server.

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5. The online information exchange method as set forth in Claim 1, wherein said step b) includes the step of, by said client, sending information about its actually used IP address to said server together with said information about its valid IP addresses.

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6. The online information exchange method as set forth in Claim 1 or Claim 2, wherein said step b) includes the step of, by said client, sending information about its used port to said server together with said information about its valid IP addresses; and

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wherein said step a-1) includes the step of, by said client, sending said information about its used port to said server together with said information about its IP address for access to said server.

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7. A system for exchanging online information along an optimum path in a client/server system, said client/server system including a client having a plurality of Internet protocol (IP) addresses for sending and receiving the online

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information over an Internet network, and a server connected to said client via a router, wherein said client is adapted for sending first information about its IP address for access to said server, to said server upon accessing said server, 5 determining whether it employs a private network, from first acknowledgement information sent from said server in response to said first information, sending second information about its valid IP addresses to said server upon determining that it employs the private network, and exchanging the online 10 information with said server via an IP address providing the optimum path to said server, on the basis of second acknowledgement information sent from said server in response to said second information; and

said server is adapted for comparing said access IP 15 address contained in said first information sent from said client with an IP address of said client for actual access to said server via said router to determine whether the two IP addresses are the same, sending the determined result as said first acknowledgement information to said client and then 20 sending said second acknowledgement information to all of said valid IP addresses contained in said second information, sent from said client in response to said first acknowledgement information, such that said client detects the optimum path to said server.

8. The online information exchange system as set forth in Claim 7, wherein said client is further adapted for detecting an IP address at which said second acknowledgement information from said server has arrived earliest, recognizing that the
5 detected IP address is one for the provision of the optimum path to said server and then exchanging the online information with said server via the detected IP address.

9. The online information exchange system as set forth in
10 Claim 7, wherein said client is further adapted for sending information about its actually used IP address to said server together with said second information about its valid IP addresses.

15 10. The online information exchange system as set forth in Claim 7, wherein said client is further adapted for sending information about its used port to said server together with said first information about its IP address for access to said server and said second information about its valid IP
20 addresses.